

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELFAS 00170 161558Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-15 /069 W
-----170226Z 020757 /66

R 161419Z MAY 77
FM AMCONSUL BELFAST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1680
AMEMBASSY LONDON
INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMCONSUL EDINBURGH
USNAVCOMMSTA LONDON DERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 170

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, UK, EI
SUBJECT: END OF LOYALIST STRIKE

REF: BELFAST 169

1. LOYALIST GENERAL STRIKE ENDED OFFICIALLY AT MIDNIGHT
MAY 13 WITH ANNOUNCEMENT BY UNIONIST ACTION COUNCIL (UAC).
STRIKE EFFECTIVELY ENDED AT NOON ON FRIDAY WHEN ULSTER DEFENSE
ASSOCIATION LET IT BE KNOWN ON SHANKILL AND SANDY ROW IN BELFAST
THAT IT WAS ALL OVER AND THAT PUBS, SHOPS AND BLACK TAXIS
COULD OPERATE NORMALLY. IT GENERALLY AGREED THAT FINAL
BLOW TO STRIKE WAS RE-OPENING OF LARNE HARBOR AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
BOOST THIS GAVE TO BALLYLUMFORD ELECTRICITY WORKERS.

2. IT APPEARS POLITICAL LEADERS IAN PAISLEY AND ERNEST
BAIRD WOULD HAVE LIKED TO PROLONG ACTION BUT DISCOURAGEMENT
AND FATIGUE OF REMAINDER OF COUNCIL WERE TOO PROFOUND TO BE
LIFTED. PAISLEY SAW STRIKE AS PARTIAL SUCCESS, ESPECIALLY
IN HIS OWN NORTH ANTRIM CONSTITUENCY, ADMITTED TO TACTICAL
ERROR OF ENGAGING IN PROLONGED RATHER THAN LIGHTNING STRIKE,
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PROMISED FUTURE ACTION UNLESS SECURITY SITUATION IMPROVED
AND ANNOUNCED HE WOULD STAY IN POLITICS.

3. IN IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF STRIKE, SEVERAL POLITICIANS,
INCLUDING OFFICIAL UNIONISTS HARRY WEST AND REVEREND MARTIN
SMYTH, DEMANDED THAT EXTRA TROOPS ON HAND NOW BE USED AGAINST
PROVISIONAL IRA, PARTICULARLY IN BORDER AREAS.

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP) LEADER MP GERRY FITT EXPRESSED OPTIMISM ABOUT THE CLIMATE FOR NEW INTER-PARTY TALKS ABOUT AGREED DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT. HE ALSO GAVE QUALIFIED PRAISE TO ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY (RUC) AND WITHDREW HIS EARLIER RESERVATIONS ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY OF STATE ROY MASON.

4. MASON WAS GENEROUS IN VICTORY. HE SAID THAT HE WAS NOT CONCERNED WITH RAKING OVER THE ASHES BUT WANTED TO GET ON WITH THE JOB OF IMPROVING THE ECONOMIC INDUSTRIAL AND SECURITY PROBLEMS IN THE PROVINCE. IN GRACEFUL COMPLIMENT HE PRAISED PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND FOR COURAGE, DETERMINATION AND MATURITY AND ADDED THEY NOW HAD A RIGHT TO FEEL "TEN FEET TALL."

5. CONGEN NOTES AS POSTSCRIPT THAT NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE AND RUC HAVE EMERGED FROM 11 DAYS OF STRIKE STRONGER AND MORE HIGHLY REGARDED LOCALLY. ALSO TO BE WELCOMED IS AVOIDANCE OF INVIDIOUS CLAIMS OF TRIUMPH OR VICTORY. HOPEFULLY, SDLP WILL NOT RPT NOT PUSH TOO HARD IMMEDIATELY. PAISLEY, BAIRD AND THEIR SUPPORTERS SHOULD NOT RPT NOT BE HUMILIATED AS IF TOTALLY DEFEATED AND DISCREDITED. THEIR AIMS ARE POPULAR IF THEIR MEANS AND METHODS WERE SEEN TO BE FUTILE. AS REPRESENTATIVES OF CERTAIN IMPORTANT SETS OF ULSTER ATTITUDES THEY CANNOT SIMPLY BE IGNORED OR DISMISSED.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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